

### September 2002

The WorkFirst Study (WFS) sample was drawn from the statewide list of adults receiving welfare assistance in March 1999 (1999 cohort) and October 2000 (2000 cohort). The 1999 cohort respondents were interviewed in 2000 and again in early 2001. The 2000 cohort respondents were interviewed in early 2001. This report uses data for the 1999 cohort from 3,037 interviews in the first year and the 1,955 re-interviews and data from 1,330 interviews with the 2000 cohort. We use information for children 13 and under. There were 4,946 children 13 and under from the 1999 cohort (interviewed in 2000), 3,102 from the 1999 cohort (interviewed in 2001), and 2,104 children from the 2000 cohort (interviewed in 2001).

This report describes the types of child care used by respondents for the summers of 1999 (2000 survey) and 2000 (2001 survey). In most cases the outcomes were similar for fall child care, but we note in the text where they differed. We also analyze the reasons for choosing child care providers, satisfaction with child care, costs of child care, and the use of DSHS subsidies for child care. Where relevant we describe the connections between the employment for the WorkFirst recipients and the child care outcomes.

### FINDINGS:

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- During the summer months more than half of the children were cared for by the respondent or a relative when the parent was working or searching for a job.
- Use of formal care (child care center or formal program) was more frequent for the 1999 cohort in the later period (summer 2000) than it was for that group earlier (summer 1999) or for the 2000 cohort.
- Children of parents who worked all or part of the summer were more likely to be in formal child care arrangements.
- The most common reasons that respondents gave for choosing their child care arrangements were trust of the provider and convenience.
- Over two-thirds of parents reported that they were very satisfied with their child care arrangements.
- Over a third of the children were in unpaid child care arrangements and at least three-quarters were in arrangements that cost less than \$50 per month.
- Slightly more than half of the children received DSHS subsidies.

## Summer Child Care Arrangements

**FIGURE 1:**

### TYPES OF CHILD CARE USED DURING THE SUMMER

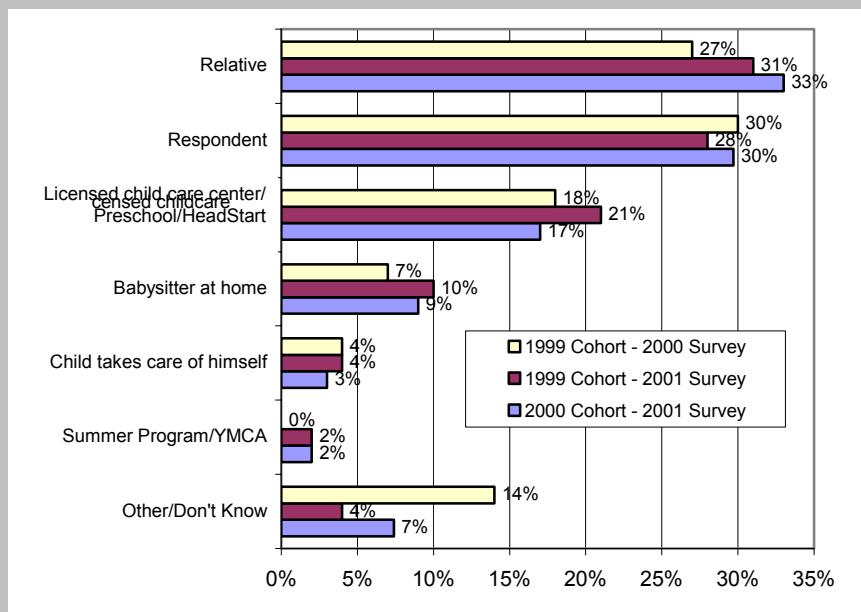


Figure 1 shows the child care arrangements for children 13 and under for the times when parents were working or searching for a job. More than half of the children were cared for by either the respondent or a relative during the summer months. About a fifth of the children were enrolled in a formal child care arrangement such as licensed child care center or summer program. About 10 percent of children were cared for by a babysitter at home. Grandparents provided care for about half of those children cared for by a relative and another fifth were cared for by the other parent or a stepparent (not shown). The child care patterns were very similar for fall child care.

**FIGURE 2:**

### USE OF FORMAL CARE BY AGE OF CHILD

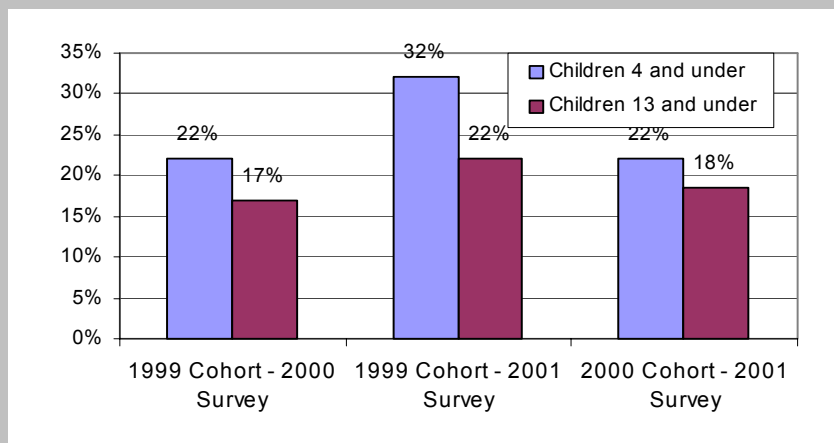


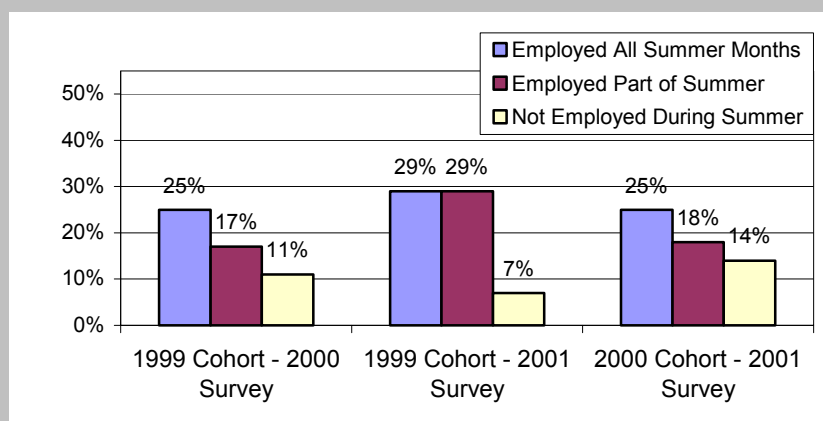
Figure 2 shows the proportion of children cared for in formal child care arrangements including centers, licensed homes, preschools, or summer programs. The children from the 1999 cohort were significantly more likely to report using formal care during the summer of 2000 (2001 survey) than

they were earlier (2000 survey). The rates for the 2000 cohort in the 2001 survey were also lower than those for the 1999 cohort. This might reflect a move toward more formal care arrangements as families move to employment. In summer of 2000 (2001 survey) about a third of the 1999 cohort preschool children and about one-fifth of the 2000 cohort children were in formal child care arrangements. In the fall, somewhat more children were in formal child care arrangements (raising rates by about 4 percentage points).

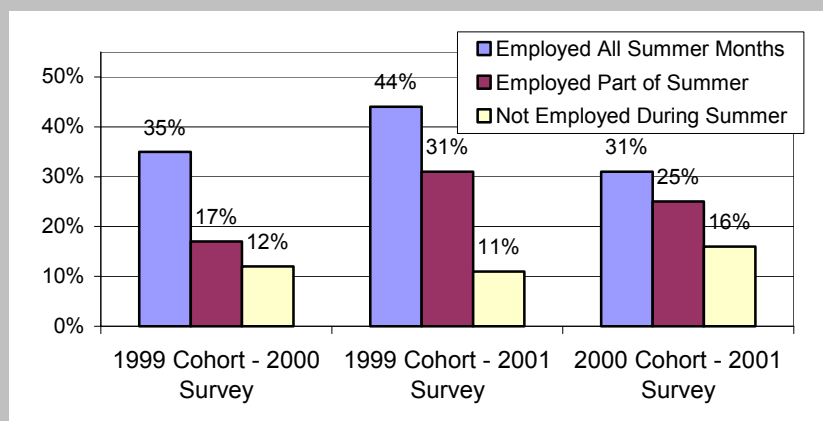
We used monthly employment data from the survey to categorize respondents into three groups: those who worked each month of the summer, those who worked one or two months of the summer, and those who did not work during the summer. Figure 3 shows the proportion of children in formal care for each of these groups for children 13 and under, and for preschool aged children.

**FIGURE 3: PARENTAL EMPLOYMENT AND FORMAL CHILD CARE USE**

**ALL CHILDREN  
(13 AND UNDER)**



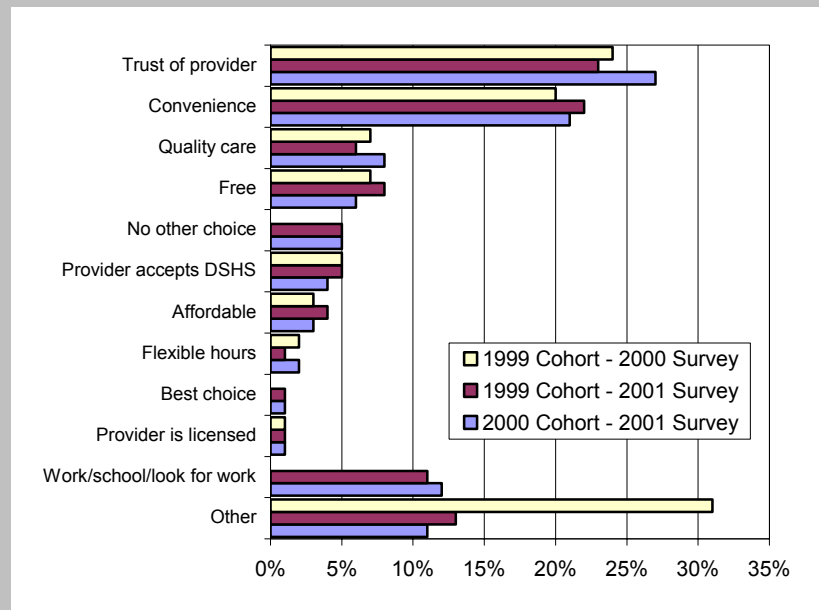
**CHILDREN 4  
AND UNDER**



Children of parents who worked all or part of the summer were more likely to be in formal child care arrangements. Use of formal child care was most common for children under 4 and when parents worked all months in the summer.

**FIGURE 4\*:**

**REASONS GIVEN FOR  
CHOOSING SUMMER  
CHILD CARE  
ARRANGEMENTS**



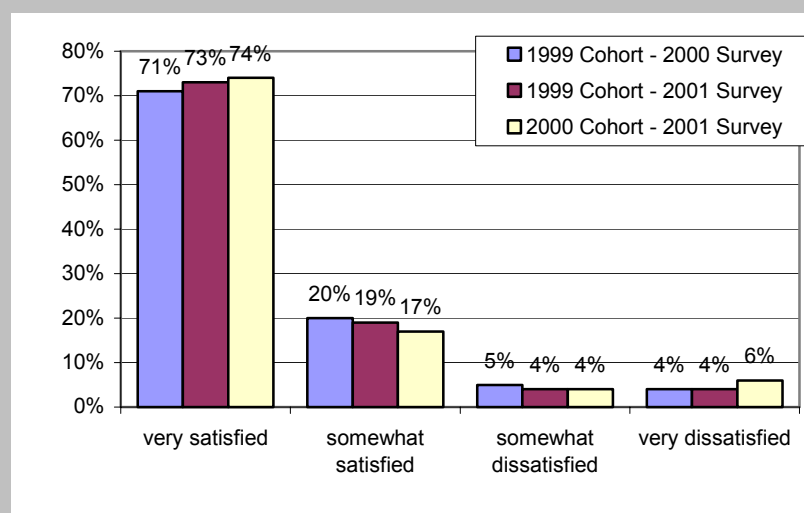
**\*INCLUDES CHILDREN CARED FOR BY A RELATIVE, BABYSITTER, OR FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS.**

The most common reasons that respondents gave for choosing their summer child care arrangements were trust of the provider (for about a quarter of the children), convenience (about a fifth) and because the respondent had to work, go to school, or look for work (about 10 percent). For about five percent of the children, parents cited quality of care, free child care, and lack of choice as the reasons for their choice. The reasons for choosing child care arrangements did not differ significantly by employment levels.

**Satisfaction with Child Care Arrangements**

**FIGURE 5\*:**

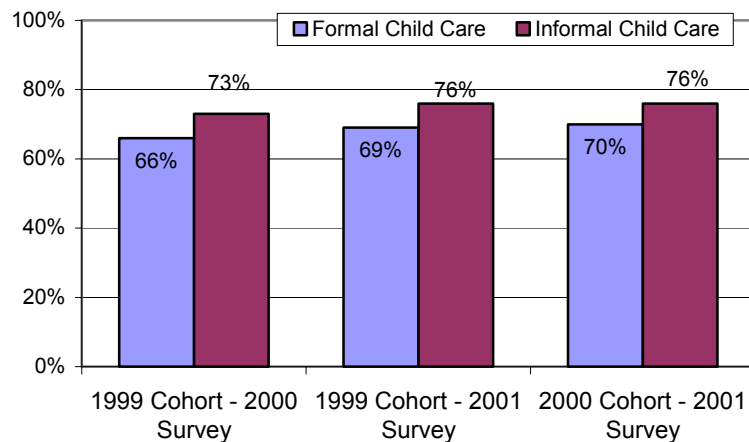
**SATISFACTION  
WITH SUMMER  
CHILD CARE**



**\*INCLUDES CHILDREN CARED FOR BY A RELATIVE, BABYSITTER, OR FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS.**

Over two-thirds of parents reported that they were very satisfied with their child care arrangements (Figure 5). Less than ten percent of each group reported being somewhat or very dissatisfied with their summer child care.

**FIGURE 6\*:**  
**PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS WERE “VERY SATISFIED” WITH SUMMER CHILD CARE**

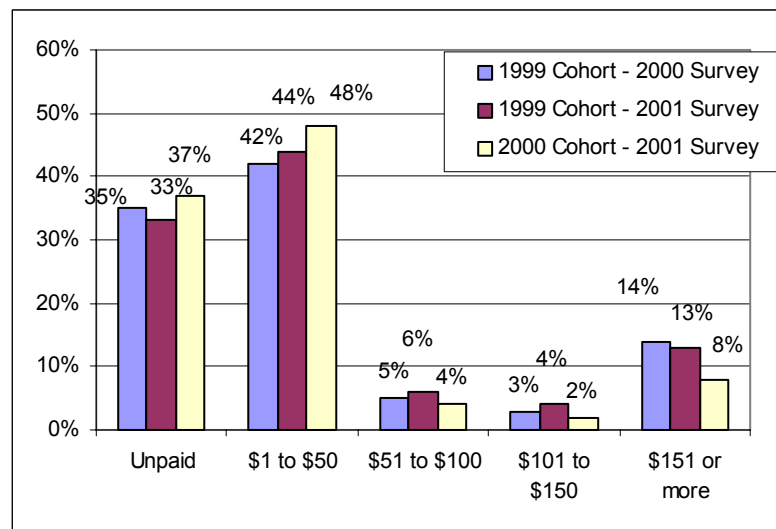


**\*INCLUDES CHILDREN CARED FOR BY A RELATIVE, BABYSITTER, OR FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS.**

Parents were somewhat less satisfied with formal child care (licensed child care center, preschool, HeadStart, summer program, YMCA) than they were with informal arrangements (a relative or a babysitter) (Figure 6). In all three surveys, those using formal child care arrangements were less likely to be very satisfied than were those using informal methods (though this difference was not significant in the 2000 cohort).

## Cost of Child Care and DSHS Subsidies

**FIGURE 7\*:**  
**MONTHLY SUMMER CHILD CARE COSTS<sup>1</sup>**



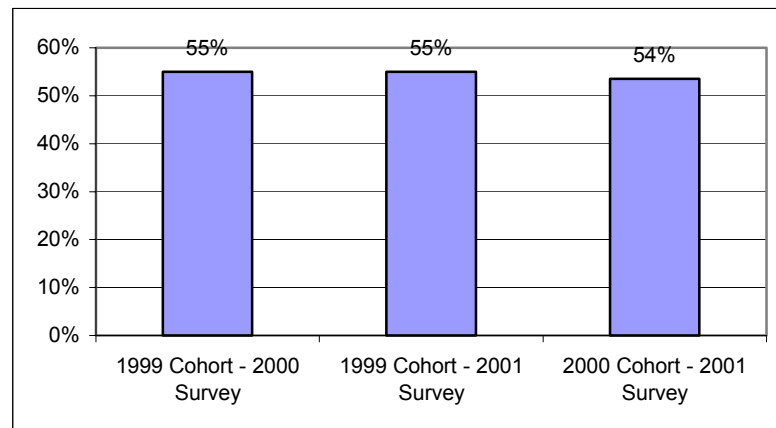
<sup>1</sup> IN THE 2000 SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED ABOUT TOTAL MONTHLY CHILD CARE EXPENSES. IN THE 2001 SURVEY, THIS QUESTION ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES.

**\*INCLUDES CHILDREN CARED FOR BY A RELATIVE, BABYSITTER, OR FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS.**

Over a third of children in each survey were in unpaid child care arrangements and at least three-quarters were in arrangements costing less than \$50 per month (Figure 7). Child care costs for the 1999 cohort were slightly higher at both time points than were those for the 2000 cohort.

**FIGURE 8\*:**

**PERCENT OF  
CHILDREN IN CARE  
WITH DSHS SUBSIDIES**



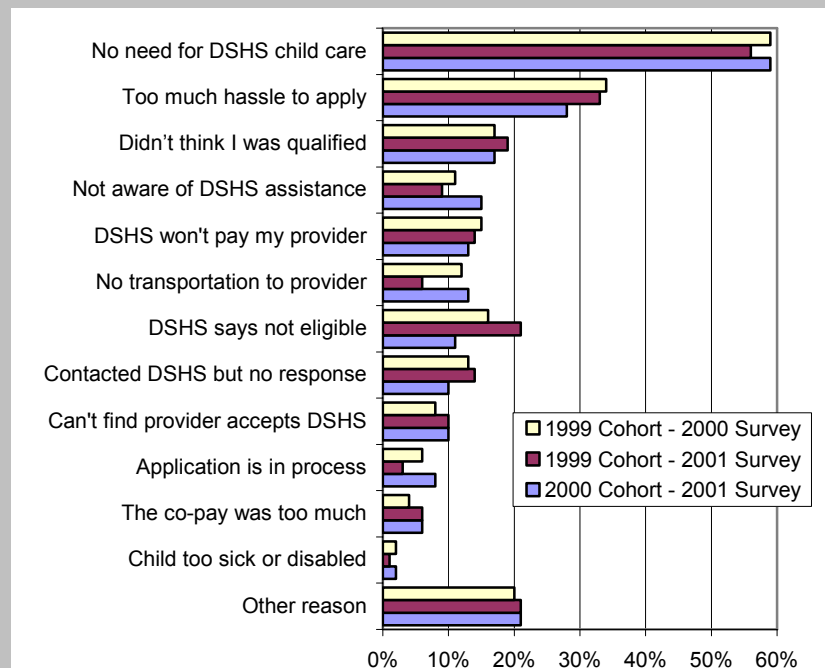
**\*INCLUDES CHILDREN CARED FOR BY A RELATIVE, BABYSITTER, OR FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS.**

Slightly more than half of the children received DSHS subsidies in the summer (between 54 and 55 percent). About 5 percent more children received DSHS subsidies in the fall (perhaps because they were more likely to be in formal child care arrangements).

Children with parents working all or part of the summer were slightly more likely to receive DSHS subsidies (not shown). But even for parents not employed during the summer (but searching for work or in training), over a third of the children in child care received subsidies (half of the 2000 cohort).

**FIGURE 9:**

**REASONS FOR  
NOT RECEIVING  
DSHS SUBSIDIES**



Over half of those not receiving subsidies said that they had no need for it. About a third said that it was too much hassle to apply, and just under a fifth did not think that they qualified. Another frequently cited reason was that DSHS said the respondent was not eligible for subsidies. However, over 20 percent of respondents in all cohorts reported that the reason they do not receive DSHS child care subsidies in the summer is that they cannot find a provider who will accept the subsidy or DSHS will not pay their chosen provider.